



The *Flyline*

The Newsletter of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association

June 2024



“Josiah Casting on North Bear Creek”
Second Place in 2024 HFFA Show Photo Contest
By Dave Cornelder

Save the Dates, February 21, 22, 23, 2025
HFFA Annual Meeting and Show
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Coralville, Iowa



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The President's Hatch

Hopefully everyone has been out catching a few fish. The chaotic weather has made it quite difficult, but fishing has been fair, nonetheless. During the month of May we hit a red-hot bite for crappies, yellow bass, bluegills, redear sunfish, and even freshwater drum. Lakes have been the primary target since most interior rivers are at flood stage. I spent a few days in the Iowa Great Lakes region and enjoyed some phenomenal fishing for pike, pumpkinseed, drum, bullheads, and common carp.

Many of our folks that fish in southwest Iowa have voiced concerns about a chemical spill that killed 750,000 fish in the East Nishnabotna River this March. The Iowa DNR is currently working with the Environmental Protection Commission and the Attorney General to pursue legal action. The chemical spill was a result of staff leaving a hose valve open, which later resulted in 265,000 gallons of liquid nitrogen fertilizer entering the river. It killed every fish in a 50-mile span downstream of Red Oak. Amphibians, reptiles, and miscellaneous invertebrates also died because of the spill. If you'd like to voice concerns to parties other than myself, please contact the Iowa DNR directly for updates.

We have set dates and a venue for the 2025 show. With all the positive feedback we received from last year and having Quad Cities set to host, we have determined that the show will be February 21-23 at the Hyatt Regency in Coralville.



Davis Horton

The venue offered us a bonus space, so we don't have to stick fly tying in the hallway again. The board will be discussing potential speakers, vendors, and more at upcoming meetings. Thanks to our Quad Cities chapter and members of the Dubuque Fly Fishers for tackling the show. If any of you have connections to potential vendors, speakers, or volunteers, feel free to contact the show committee members that are listed on the HFFA website.

HFFA is also in the process of listing each club's inventory for our personal records. If you have any HFFA equipment such as rods, reels, books,

DVDs, vises, tying materials, etc. please contact your local club with what you've got. This will help us track down equipment in the future and keep the organization's inventory up to date for events. We are also working on central storage locations for each club, but that will happen after the updated inventory is completed. Get out there and do some fishing. Tight lines!

Davis



Now is the time to get those "Gills".



**Help Support
Port-a-Potties at N&S Bear Creeks
Go Fund Me**
<https://www.gofundme.com/port-a-potty>

Contacts & Meetings

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Don Otto, HFFA Flyline Editor

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Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of Month
7 to 9 pm

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Iowa Chapter

7025 Hickman Road Ste #1
Urbandale, IA

Contact: Dale Sanders
iaflyfisher@outlook.com

Quad Cities Chapter

Meets 3rd Thursday Every Month
6:00 pm to 8+

Riverdale Town Hall
310 Manor Dr.

Riverdale, Iowa
Contact: John Channon
jc.channon@mchsi.com

Dubuque Fly Fishers

Meets 2nd & 4th Monday 6:00 pm
September to May

Swiss Valley Nature Center
13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Dubuque,
IA

Contact: Gary Kruse
garykruse97@gmail.com
facebook.com/dubuqueflyfishers

Central Iowa Fly Fishers

Meets 3rd Saturday 9:00 am
September to May
Our Lady's Immaculate Heart
Church

510 East 1st St., Ankeny, IA
Contact: Kirk Rosenow
kcrosenow@gmail.com

Iowa City Contact

Contact: Ryan Maas
maas_ryan@yahoo.com

Cedar Rapids Contact

Contact: Lance Zook
l.a.zook@mchsi.com

TROUT UNLIMITED NORTH BEAR CHAPTER

Meetings held second Thursday
of month

September – May, Starting at
6:30 pm.

The Tavern Pizza & Pasta Grill
1755 50th St.

West Des Moines, IA

Website: tu-northbear.org

David Klemme - President
president@tu-northbear.org

TROUT UNLIMITED DRIFTLESS CHAPTER

Meets the first Thursday of the
month October through May @

7:00 pm in the basement of
T-Bocks Sports Bar and Grill,

206 Water St. Decorah
www.iadriftless.org

Iowa Women Fly Fishers

Join us for good fishing
and good company .

[https://www.facebook.com/
groups/170891783425206](https://www.facebook.com/groups/170891783425206)

katelodge25@gmail.com

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Trout Unlimited Spring Creeks Chapter

Ray Thys – President

Check Their Facebook

www.facebook.com/springcreekstu

Iowa's Coldwater Conservancy

Tom Murray

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Event Calendar

<p><u>June 2024</u></p> <p>Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics June 12 - 14 Intermediate June 14 - 18 Beginner Need to preregister! Avalanche, WI wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com</p> <p><u>July 2024</u></p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p><u>September 2024</u></p> <p>September ? Brule River Spey Day Lake Superior Steelhead Assn. Brule river@ McNeil House Brule, WI www.steelheaders.org</p> <p><u>October 2024</u></p> <p>October 4 - 6 2024 Drifless Flyathon Decorah, Iowa flyathon@driftlessonthefly.com runingrivers.org May 3rd Signup Limited</p> <p>October 4 - 6 2024 Casting for Recovery Camp Ewalu's Stone Retreat Center Strawberry Point, IA 52076 Must Register norrisl@ihaonline.org</p> <p>October 7 - 13 FFI - Women Connect 2024 Rendevous Whalen, MN Registration on line March 2024</p>	<p><u>November 2024</u></p> <p><u>December 2024</u></p> <p><u>January 2025</u></p> <p><u>February 2025</u></p> <p>February 21- 23 HFFA Annual Fly Fishing Show Hyatt Regency Coralville 300 E. 9th Coralville, IA 52241 Information at Hawkeyeflyfishing.com</p> <p>February 21 - 23 Mid-Iowa Bass Masters Swap Meet & boat Show 4-H building State fairgrounds Des Moines, IA www.midiowabassmasters.com</p> <p><u>March 2025</u></p> <p>March 21 - 23 Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo Hamline University St. Paul, MN info@greatwatersflyexpo.com</p> <p>March 29 Fly Tyers Rendezvous Spring Creeks TU Eagles Club, Monticello, IA Facebook.com/springcreekstu</p> <p>March 27 - 29 Sowbug Roundup North Arkansas Fly Fishers Mountain Home, AR www.sowbugroundup.org</p>	<p>March ? Cornhusker Fly Fishers Spring Fling Kiewit Lodge Mahoney State Park Ashland, NE</p> <p><u>April 2025</u></p> <p><u>May 2025</u></p> <p>May ? HFFA Bluegill Outing Lake Wapello Drakesville, IA Ronda Long rondalong67@yahoo.com</p> <p><u>June 2025</u></p> <p>Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics June ? Intermediate June ? Beginner Need to preregister! Avalanche, WI wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com</p>
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The Flyline is the official publication of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. It is published in April, June, September, and December. The HFFA is a chapter of the Fly Fishers International. Articles may be submitted as MS Word or as a text file. Typed, printed or clearly handwritten documents are also accepted. Photos can be submitted digitally. Send original jpeg. Deadline is one month before publication. Send all materials to:
 Don Otto, The Flyline Editor
hawkeyeflyfisher@gmail.com
 641-230-1468

HFFA Business Report

**HFFA Board Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2024
Manchester Fish Hatcher
Submitted by Don Otto**

Meeting called to order by President Davis Horton at 11:00 AM

Attendees: Davis Horton,, Keith Wunder, John Miller, Kate Lodge, Martin Acerbo, Kirk Rosenow, Dale Tayloe, Ronda Long, Don Otto, and Ryan Maas

Welcome from Davis Horton

A motion was made and unanimously approved to accept minutes from the January 6, 2024 meeting..

Keith Wunder gave the treasurer's report and gave a detailed explanation of expenditures since he became treasurer. He also explained the income and expenditures associated with the 2024 HFFA Show. After some discussion, a motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the financial report. Members who want the details of the finances should contact their representative to the board.

Old Business

1. The need for a storage unit was discussed at length. Since Dubuque, Quad Cities, and Central Iowa affiliated groups intend to keep their respective rods, reels, etc locally and handy, there was not much left to put into a storage unit that would cost about \$1000 per year. It was decided that a detailed inventory and location of all items would be created and shared.

New Business

1. The HFFA Annual Meeting and Show will be at he Coralville Hyatt Regency on February 21, 22, & 23, 2025. Dave Jones, Kate Lodge, and John Miller representing a combined effort of the Quad Cities and Dubuque Fly Fishers. The main purpose of the show; to make money for stream improvement and access or to attract new members and education of existing members, was discussed. Volunteers will be needed and should contact one of the co-leaders.
2. Davis brought up the need to fill the conservation chair position. No decision was made.
3. A request from Steve Veysey for \$2000 to help with water testing materials was discussed. No decision was made and Davis will contact Steve for more information.
4. Board member election was discussed. All officer positions need to be filled. Quad Cities and Dubuque are the normal rotation for directors, but due to covid several directors were filled at the Ankeny meeting. Directors serve two years so all but Martin Acerbo elected at the 2024 Coralville meeting will be up for election. Interested members in serving should contact Davis Horton.

Next Board Meeting will be on July 20th at the Manchester Hatchery

A motion to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved at 1:30 PM

Don

2024 Iowa State Fair Fly Tying Competition

by Larry Murphy

The Iowa State Fair will be held August 8 through August 18, 2024. We will be holding the Fly-Tying competition once again this year. I am sure everyone has practiced tying their favorite flies and are willing to enter them in the state contest.

The Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association will again be sponsoring the Fly-Tying competition at this year's Iowa State Fair. The competition is supported by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa State Fair. The goal is to provide an opportunity for the public to view the art of fly tying and to promote fly fishing in Iowa.

The fly-tying display will be in the DNR Building on the Fairgrounds during the fair. The judging is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 7th at 1:00 p.m. in the DNR Building.

Fly entries need to be received at the Fair Administration post box by July 31, 2024.

There are three divisions

- Adult division is for anyone **17 years of age and older.**
- Junior division is for anyone **16 years and younger.**
- Expert division for tiers who have **sold flies.**

There are four categories for each division. The categories are the following:

- Dry Fly
- Wet Fly/Soft Hackle/Nymph
- Streamers
- Open Class

You may enter in each of the categories, but **only one fly for each category.** **No flies smaller than size #18. No flies larger than size #2.** **To enter, please provide the fly tier's name, the division to be entered, the category to be entered and the name of the fly.**

You must be an Iowa resident to enter or a member of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. If you have **ever tied flies commercially or sold the flies that you have tied, you must enter the Expert Division.** If you won a blue ribbon for one of the categories last year, you are not permitted to enter the same category this year.

The Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association will provide judges for the competition. Ribbons will be given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. Each fly will be judged in its category. In our contest, a panel of judges will choose the places in each category and division. The visitors to the state fair will see the flies displayed in the DNR Building

Flies must be sent to the Iowa State Fair Administration Office, P.O. Box 57130, Des Moines, IA 50317 and **received by July 31, 2024.** Each fly entered must have the **Fly Tier's name, address, telephone number, name of the fly, division to be entered and the category.** **Junior division entries must state the age of the fly tier.**

Larry

On left Judges Paul Domoto, Dave Rosset, & Keith Wunder



HFFA 2024 Bluegill Outing

The 2024 HFFA Bluegill outing at Lake Wapello occurred May 17 & 18, 2024. There was a small but dedicated group fishing and eating. Ronda Long helped organize this event. Dan Peterson, who had led the outing for many years was there to lend a very capable hand in food preparation. The following photos were supplied by Ronda Long.



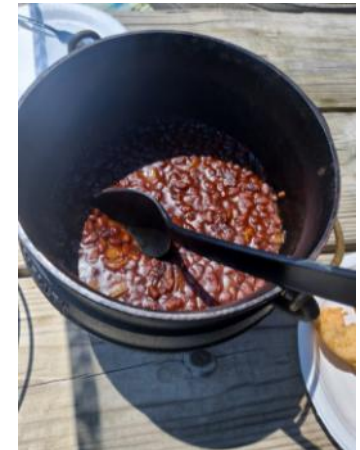
The group enjoying the day and the company.



Dan Peterson cooking.



John Channon breadng fish.



As you can see there was plenty of good food. Dan created a Cuban chicken dish on the left and Cheryl Channon made her onion patties on the right.



Before Work

By Kirk Rosenow

Second Place Essay in 2024 HFFA Show Essay Contest

Holding a fly rod in left hand I adjust my sling pack with right and start walking from the truck. There are no limestone outcrops, forests, or DNR cut grass paths only houses with immaculate clean-cut yards, metal fences, and a sidewalk peppered with goose poop. This fish local pond is on my short list before it becomes a green mat over the next month and garage door shutting to park is only two songs on my truck playlist.

Moss is just starting near shore the cool spring has put us several weeks behind. Top water is on the agenda this morning only because I feel like doing it. I pull out a white popper from the pack and start tying a non-slip mono-knot...dang loop is bigger than I like but it will due. I see a bass aimlessly wandering in the shallows which hastens my pace.

I make a cast and start the irregular cadence of popping with short line pulls. Creating the action of the injured bait puts me in a trance and after several casts I start moving down the bank and repeat this unique form of mediation. My mind starts to drift. I hear a big group of joggers going by. There is a gym close by next to another fish local pond and suspect they are from there. Last week they were outside next to the pond flipping big tires around like you might see in a Rocky movie when I was walking back to truck. A younger man with his hands on his knees looks up and asks me how I did. We both looked at each other with some envy and implied acknowledgement...I was wishing I was in shape and he wanted to be fishing.

A big explosion on the popper startles me to reality and I instinctively set the hook and bring in a small bass. This general process repeats itself many times over for the next half hour. Seems like I am catching the same 8-to-12-inch bass with occasional overzealous bluegill. Every explosion creates a short rush and mental image of a 4lb bass on the start of each strike. Fishing top water can be addictive whether trout sipping flies or bass exploding...even small ones. It's a sickness but I could do this all morning. I pull some weeds off the popper I hooked on the bank and look around. Still no other anglers on the pond. A mallard couple lands on the other side of pond, a red and white bobber bobs in the water tethered with old mono next to a Gatorade bottle, and a dog barks at me from fenced in yard from behind.

I move to the corner of the pond. I see some larger shapes drifting in the depths. There is an explosion on the second pop. Something is amiss. Wow the small bass has my popper but also a plastic worm in his mouth. Exhibit "A" I guess for amount of pressure these fish see. I take a picture, release both hooks, and smile while watching the bass dart away.

Something catches my eye as a big shadow moves by which turns into a carp. I can see another carp tailgating behind. I change out leaders and put on a small Lance Eagan's headstand fly and a few minutes later I am pacing the bank. Of course...now I catch a glimpse of a nice bass cruising by which brings thoughts of switching back to poppers. I continue to stare into water anxiously.

Finally, that's a carp tail. I approach closer. I make a cast but too far to the side. I do a follow up but the carp bolts. I didn't line him but somewhere he saw a threat. I walked the banks but don't see an opportunity. After what seems like 10 minutes, I make a blind cast just to be fishing and then stare into the depths again.

There is a mud cloud now and a big tail in perfect position with nose down. I make a cast to the side and do a drag and drop with the fly in front of him and stare. The gills move and line twitches so I stripe set. The fly line zips across the water, rod bends, and reel screams...

I hold my broken tippet wondering what could have been and just stare. I check my watch. First meeting starts at top of the hour. I start a short brisk walk back to the truck. I got my fix.

Kirk

Northbound and Down

Fishing the Premier Musky Fly Tourney

By Ron Smith

Concentrating on casting from the bow of his Stratos, I heard Richard from the stern grunt, "Got one." and turned to see his bent rod and a swirl 30 feet behind the boat. "Great!", I said, "I'll get the net." The team leaps into action but the fish had different ideas and almost immediately was off. Rejection and dejection. Shoulders slumped, Richard retrieved his line, checked his wire bite tippet and the black and orange Beuford fly. No hint of a problem. The fish just twisted off. I replaced the net and we went back to fishing.

This is not a tale of bawdy fishing success. No, "We filled the boat, Bob!" or "We really hammered them today, didn't we!" No, it is a tale of challenges, challenges that sometimes border on downright frustration. Challenges of weather, of tackle, of flies, of casting skill, of some fish fighting adroitness, and above all, the cantankerous personality of the target species, the muskellunge.

The Premier Musky Fly Fishing tournament was inaugurated in the fall 2016 by Treeland Resort on the Chippewa Flowage near Hayward, Wisconsin. Thirty-three teams of two, and in a few cases, three anglers, assembled for the two day, fly fishing only, event. The tourney has grown to 50 teams in 2023. Absolutely no gear fishing tackle is allowed on a boat. Anglers catching the longest fish and leading teams are recognized on both Friday and Saturday with the team catching the longest total over two days declared the overall winner.

Our path to Treeland begins the summer before when the resort opens registration. Richard and I register as Team Angry Ames Anglers. Next year's registration may be Team Angrier Ames Anglers. Perhaps a minor name change will change our luck. Superstitions do factor in..... We also reserve a room at the Treeland motel on site. Final preparations late September include Richard preparing his boat, his F-150 pickup, and his tackle. I prep my clothing and tackle and grocery shop for our breakfasts and lunches. Richard's truck and boat, I get food and cook. Richard, as boat captain, also gets the comfortable bed. I sleep on the Murphy. We split the gas. That's the deal.

Tourney day one, I travel up to Ames and transfer my gear and groceries to Richard's pick-up by 0700. We swing on to I-35 and begin the trip north, through the Cities and then turning east, crossing the St Croix towards Turtle Lake, north up US -53 then hit US-63 paralleling the Namekogan towards Hayward transitioning from the agricultural area into the north woods. We often see migrating flocks of sandhill cranes in central Wisconsin. Lunch stop is an hour or so east in Wisconsin near Baron or Rice Lake. Our plan is to "pre-fish an area we're interested in by about mid-afternoon which also involves checking the suitability of the launch site/parking area. We have launched from both public access areas and a private launch area where we pay a small fee.

After our exploratory "shake-down cruise" we travel on to Treeland's where we check to our motel and try our skill at the casting contest. Three casts, no warm-up, at a musky head inside a hula hoop at approximately 55 feet using Treeland's rod and line set-up, not our own. A fly placed inside the hoop advances the contestant to the final round; placing the practice fly in the musky's mouth earns you \$50. Ulysses Grant has yet to be claimed. The recent line set-up was a weight forward sink-tip line with about a 10 foot leader, a more challenging outfit to cast. Richard and I came close to the hoop on one cast each last year but did not advance. I saw the winner, a left hander, make a large swooping side arm Belgian type cast that started out 15 feet to his left side with the wind to his left side, and watched the leader and fly curve into the hoop. Skill? Or luck?

The lawn on the south side of the resort features a large fire pit in the center. An outside porch overlooks the lawn with rustic tables and chairs. Richard and I head into the bar / restaurant and acquire a complementary glass of Angry Minnow River Pig pale ale followed by sitting down and ordering our prime rib dinners, the first of the contest's three evening meals that are included in the entry fee. Friday's feature is fish and chips on and Saturday it's lasagna. More anglers drift in from the casting contest or from the porch and the re-acquainting continues, fishermen from past contests gleefully greeting each other. A few well-known fly fishing musky guides and /or authors such as guide Brad Bohlen and Dan Small of Wisconsin Public Radio are here. Our friends Nick and his brother Pete Anderson come through. Both have ready smiles. Nick has the personality of the Delta House rush chairman from Animal House, "How ya doin', Damn glad you're here!" Pete is the quieter brother. Nick won a recent Premier tourney.

This is not a gathering of tiny dry fly fishing types, although I'm sure most also fish for trout. They wear heavy flannel shirts and Carhartt pants with wool or wool / synthetic "beanies" or trucker style fishing caps and maybe a Stormy Chromer or two. A very few Patagonia vests and perhaps a Simm's jacket, but mostly sweaters or heavier vests. It's a blue collar collection of anglers used to tough, cool weather and long days of casting heavy fly tackle.

The restaurant crowd is picking up and the resort owner, Harold Treeland, is moving through and greeting old friends and new. His wife, Laurie, is helping out in the bar and wherever she is needed. Likewise, their daughter, Tatum, the tourney organization master-mind, is checking and arranging a multitude of door prizes. She will compile and post the tourney results on Friday and Saturday. The wait staff, a battle hardened squad of veterans, is likewise springing into action to take and deliver dinner orders.

continued on next page

At 7:00 p.m. Harold picks up the mike and the evening festivities begin. Harold first announces the winner of the casting contest who is awarded a "Just Encase" fly box. Harold then begins the drawing for the plethora of door prizes donated by sponsors; fishing caps, shirts, fly lines, fly shop gift certificates, Angry Minnow beer, and even frozen meat packages from a local locker. Drawing winners often receive a cheer from friends in the crowd. Three or four times in the hour Harold produces an envelope, "I have in my hand an envelope that inside is not ten, not twenty, not thirty, but," his voice rising, and the crowd joins in, "FIFTY DOLLARS IN COLD, HARD, CASH!" which always elicits a cheer from the crowd. Additional top door prizes could be a St Croix fly rod or Simms jacket. Harold closes the program by reminding the anglers of the contest rules, specifically that the fish must be measured and photographed with the day's colored dot stickers affixed to the bump board and checked in by 5:00 p.m. each day. The crowd begins to slowly thin out, yet some continue to linger sharing stories in the restaurant/ bar area.

Richard and I awake by 6:00 a.m. on Friday morning and I prepare breakfast, eggs, sausage, toast, coffee, juice. I clean up breakfast dishes and make our lunches while Richard checks the boat, especially the charging system for the trolling and gas motors.

We have already decided which flowage we plan to fish and our road trip takes twenty minutes through the Wisconsin woods, frequently seeing deer and turkeys. Richard is a veteran musky gear fisherman who has taken a 50+ fish from Mille Lac and several 40"+ fish in Canada using big lures like a Mepps Musky Killer or Mayhem Double Cowgirls. His musky fly arsenal is a 9' 12 weight St. Croix rod and he likes to throw orange/black Beufords or red/black Game Changers. I use either a 9', 9 weight TFO or an 8'6" 10 weight Echo Edge with Deceivers or Hang Time flies, on a Teeny 300 shooting head line. I'm partial to orange flies, but I am one to change flies frequently. The 2023 contest had us fishing an area reported to have smaller muskies, but greater numbers. We opted going for numbers, but the numbers did not come about.

I follow Richard's hunches on where we might find a fish. We fish cabbage beds, humps, saddles between islands, downed timber, boat docks, shorelines, and always from shallow to deep water. By autumn the Wisconsin muskies have seen every gear thrower lure and every Black Double Beuford, Black Chicken Choker, White Clam or Green and White Pig Sticker that fly anglers can cast, probably the entire inventory at Thorne Brothers and Musky Fool. My theory is that by this time of year you have to put a fly in the musky's bailiwick to cause an immediate territorial reaction strike, although more seasoned musky anglers than me always add in a figure 8 at the boat to see if a curious fish might be just out of sight and following the fly.

The north Wisconsin weather in October can be changeable. We have fished in shirt sleeve blue sky weather one day transitioning into a northwest wind and intermittent showers with cooler conditions the next. Today is the showery day as the front comes through. Saturday the cold front is in place with a northwest breeze and mixed clouds bringing out the vivid colors of fall in the north woods. Saturday brings one musky strike to Richard's Game Changer in a narrows between an island and shoreline. We have no other interest in our flies..

The Friday and Saturday evenings bring the evening dinners and Harold back to announce the leaders for that day, teams with names such as the Blackwater Bandits, Small Guys Big Flies or Musky Misfits. Total numbers of fish caught by all teams might average from 40 to 50 fish over two days with a 40" to 44" fish being the biggest. The Thorne Brothers / The Fly Angler Team won in 2023 with four fish: a 41.0", a 40.0", a 40.5" and a 38.0" fish. A team catching three fish over 40" over two days could win the contest. Harold and Tatum conclude the tourney with more door prizes, and of course, a few envelopes containing, "not ten, not twenty or thirty, but FIFTY DOLLARS IN COLD, HARD CASH!"

Richard has caught the only musky, a 33" fish, that could be posted to team Angry Ames Anglers on the leader board over the course of the tournaments we have fished. I am yet to boat a musky in the tourney. We have probably had a half dozen "bites" that we failed to hook-up. Nevertheless, we continue to refine our plans. We will be back because we relish the challenge and the camaraderie of the event. Next year just might be the year the Angrier Ames Anglers climb up the leader board.

Ron

Adjusting Your Casting Distance - Shooting Line

by Marty McVey

Everything we have discussed in the previous articles has assumed a fixed amount of fly line being cast. Unfortunately, fish do not position themselves automatically at the end of our line. It would sure make things a lot easier if they did, right?

So, how do we change our length of our fly line during a cast in order hit targets at different distances?

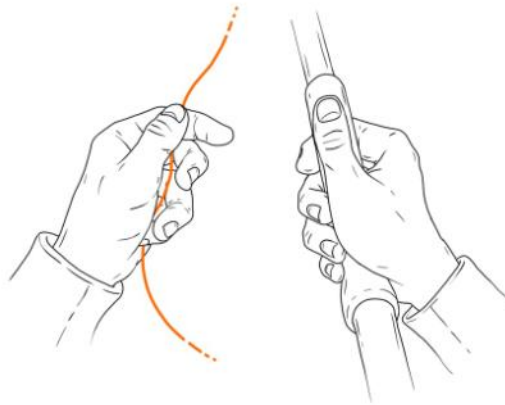
Introducing the Line Hand

Increasing our casting distance is probably the more common of our distance changes. When fishing on moving water, we are often casting upstream, allowing our fly to drift drag-free back to us. During that drift, we are stripping in the slack fly line created as it drifts towards us. In other situations, we may be streamer fishing on still or moving water, imparting action to our fly by stripping our fly back towards us. In either situation, stripping in fly line shortens the amount of fly line available to be cast back out.

So, how do we increase the amount of line during our fly cast? We do it by "shooting line." For this discussion, we will talk about shooting line on the forward cast, but you can also shoot line on the back cast. Being able to shoot line is predicated on the fact that you are able to control your loop shape and deliver a narrow loop with a straight top leg. If you are having trouble casting a narrow loop with a straight top leg, please look at some of the earlier articles on loop control.^{1,2,3,4}

Up to this point, our casting discussions have focused on our rod hand, with the fly line trapped under the finger(s) of our rod hand. For this discussion we will free the fly line from our rod hand and control it in our line hand, claspng it between our finger(s) and thumb(see figure 1).

Figure 1. Rod hand and line hand working together



The line hand position may vary by caster. Some prefer to have both hands close together when casting, while others prefer to keep their line hand somewhere closer to their hip. This is more of a style issue, so choose what is comfortable for you.

During the cast, it is important to hold the fly line firmly in the line hand, gripping it between the thumb and forefinger. This will keep you from inadvertently adding fly line during the casting stroke, introducing slack into your cast. Practice making a few overhead casts with your rod hand and controlling the fly line with your line hand. Once you are making good loops and feel comfortable with casting with the rod hand and controlling the line with your line hand, we can begin working on shooting line.

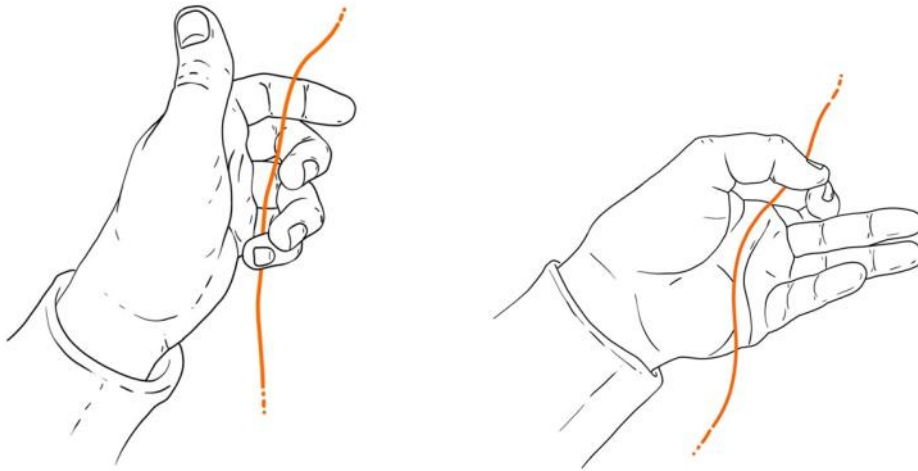
Shooting Line on the Forward Cast

Shooting line begins by making an overhead cast with your rod hand while securing the fly line in your line hand. To successfully shoot line, we must begin with narrow loops with straight top legs. Loops with a rounded top leg lack the energy required to shoot much, if any, line.

After the STOP on our forward cast, our fly rod straightens and our loop begins to propagate. At this point, we can shoot line by loosening or releasing our grip on the fly line. The forward energy of our loop will then pull(shoot) our fly line forward through our line hand. Do not lose contact with the fly line in your line hand during the shoot, because if we do, we lose control of our loops and our cast. Figure 2 shows a couple of different line hand positions to allow the fly line to shoot through your line hand.

continued on next page

Figure 2. Two different line hand positions for shooting fly line.



Open Fingers

O-Ring

Once we re-grasp control of the fly line with our line hand, we must adjust our casting stroke to account for the increased amount of line now in our cast. Longer line will require us to increase the amount of force being applied. Together, the longer line and more force will cause greater rod bend. Therefore, to maintain a straight line rod tip path we must widen our casting arc. And finally, assuming the same line speed, longer line will require longer pauses between casting strokes to allow our line to unroll properly.

It is important to note that we shoot line after the STOP on the forward cast as our loop begins to propagate. If we try to shoot before the STOP (and we all do it in the beginning), we introduce slack into our cast, which prohibits our fly rod from loading and/or unloading properly, creating a rounder rod tip path, robbing our cast of energy.

Line Shooting Drills

PULD While Shooting Line Drill

We are going to utilize the Pick Up and Lay Down Drill² to start to learn how to increase our casting distance by shooting line.

To set up the drill, begin with your rod tip on the grass with 45' of line (toes to fly) laying straight out in front. Keeping your rod tip on the grass, strip in line, stacking it at your feet, until your fly is at 30'. This puts 15' of fly line on the ground between your line hand and the reel. Next, execute the proper pick up, pause and forward casting stroke for the PULD. If you have done everything correctly, you should be primed to deliver a narrow loop with a straight top leg. After the stop, when the loop begins to propagate, release the fly line being held in the line hand and allow the line to shoot through your fingers. As the loop unrolls and the line begins to fall, follow the line down with rod tip. You should expect to shoot small amount of fly line on this first PULD.

Now, without retrieving any fly line, execute another PULD while slipping line. You should be back in the original setup position above, but now you have 32' – 33' of fly line (toes to fly) in front of you. Now with a longer line, you will need to apply more force. More force will cause the rod to bend more, thus to generate a straight line rod tip path you will need to widen your casting arc. Longer line also means that you will need to pause longer on the back cast to allow the line to unroll before beginning your forward cast. With this longer line, you should expect to shoot a greater amount of line.

Continue PULD's while shooting line until you have shot all of the slack line between the line hand and the reel. At this point, strip in your fly line until you are back to the original 25' and begin the process all over again.

False cast while slipping line

Once you've mastered the PULD while shooting line, we can move on to shooting line in our false cast in order to increase the distance of our overhead cast.

Begin with the initial setup that we used above in the PULD drill. Execute a proper pick up and begin to false cast, throwing narrow loops with straight top legs. Once you have control of your loops, choose a forward cast to shoot some line. Try to shoot a short amount of fly line and then re-grasp the fly line again in your line hand and continue false casting. As above, the longer line will require that you make adjustments to your casting stroke and timing in order to maintain narrow loops with straight top legs. In the next few false casts make those adjustments until you regain control of your loops.

continued on next page

Once you have control of you loops again, shoot a little more fly line on a forward cast, recapturing your fly line in your line hand. Then, go through the same process of regaining control of your loops. Repeat this process until you reach the point where you can no longer gain control of loops or are false casting the entire 45'. At that point, strip in you fly line to the initial setup and repeat the process.

There are 3 keys to this drill.

1. Do not try to shoot long lengths of line. Shoot a few feet at a time. This will make gaining control of you loops easier, requiring smaller adjustments to your casting stroke.
2. Do not be in a hurry to shoot line. In other words, between line shoots, make sure you have made good adjustments to your casting stroke and timing and have good control of your loops. Many beginners rush and do not totally regain control of their loops between shoots and consequently, their loops break down prematurely.
3. Do not apply added force to the forward cast to help shoot line. Without added adjustments to account for the added force, you risk creating a dip in the rod tip path and throwing a tail. No extra force on the shoot is necessary to properly shoot line.

Casting to Targets

Once you're comfortable shooting line while false casting, it's time to put it to use. This is a simple drill that builds upon the first 2. Place targets at 20', 30' and 40'. Strip off enough fly line to reach 45' with your fly. Pull in enough fly line so that your fly is resting on(near) the 20' cone target. Now, with good loop control, pick up your fly and execute at least 2 false casts and try to place your fly on the 20' target.

Once you land your fly close to the 20' target, it's time to move on to the 30' target. With your fly at the 20' target, with good loop control, pick up your fly and begin to false cast. Continue to false cast and begin to shoot line until you feel you can reach and land your fly on the 30' target. Deliver your fly to the target. If you miss your target, strip the line back in until your fly is again at the 20' target and repeat the process again.

Once you land close to your 30' target, execute the process of picking up your fly and shooting line while false casting to try to land your fly on the 40' target.

Once you hit the 40' target, strip your fly all the way back in until it is next to the 20' target and repeat.

Summary

Being able to adjust your casting distance is a must on the water. As you progress, you will be able increase the amount of line you shoot between casts. You can also begin trying to shoot line on back-to-back forward casts, all while maintaining good loop control.

Next, you can try shooting line on the back cast. The process is the same, just utilizing the back cast.

You can try to put it all together and shoot line on both the forward and the back cast, all while maintaining good loop control.

Don't forget about learning how to shoot line when casting off shoulder or when casting in different planes.

Master shooting line and you be able to target fish and get your fly to them quicker before the opportunity passes. This is especially important when targeting moving fish.

It will also keep you from lining fish by allowing you to cast with less fly line and shoot your fly to the target – never putting your fly line over or near the fish.

Improve your casting and catch more fish.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Bruce Richards (FFI CBOGE, CI, MCI L-2 Examiner) for reviewing this article and sharing their comments.

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